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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/538,562

03/29/2000

Donald F. Gordon

19880-001620US

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26291

7590

05/24/2004

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EXAMINER

TRAN, HAI V

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2611

DATE MAILED: 05/24/2004

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/538,562

Applicant(s)

GORDON ET AL.

Examiner

Hai Tran

Art Unit

2611

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4 & 5</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

1. Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable by Gordon et al. (WO 98/31115).

Claim 1, a system for providing access to array of guide pages from an interactive program guide (selection menus) within constraints imposed by limited bandwidth available in a distribution network (summary of the invention; page 2-5), the system comprising:

A distribution control center coupled to the distribution network (Fig. 1);

A session manager 216 in the distribution control center for monitoring and controlling usage of demand cast stream bandwidth with the distribution network (page 14, lines 7-page 14, lines 31); and

A transport stream generator 202 for receiving demand-cast stream usage information from the session manager and using the information to control which demand-cast streams are multiplexed into a transport stream for transmission to a plurality of terminals via the distribution network (page 12, lines 24-page 16, lines 28).

Claim 2, wherein the pluralities of terminals 124_{1-n} are coupled to a node 110 within the distribution network, and the transport stream is transmitted from the transport stream generator to the node (Fig. 1; page 12, lines 15-30+).

Claim 3, wherein the session manager 216 receives demand-cast stream acquisition, release, and request messages from the plurality of terminals (page 13, lines 21-page 14, lines 16).

Claim 4, wherein the acquisition, release, and request messages are transmitted via out-of-band communications (upstream; page 13, lines 29-35).

Claim 5, wherein the transport stream includes a list of available demand-cast streams (...what programming is available to a particular subscriber...), and the list is used by a terminal in determining whether a stream with a particular guide page may be acquired immediately (...PIN that provides "regular" viewing authorization...) or needs to be requested (...authorizes to access so-called "late night" programming...) see page 19, lines 3-16.

Claim 6, wherein the acquisition message is sent from the terminal to the session manager if the stream is acquired (...the set-top return an acknowledgment ... page 17, lines 18-24), and a request message is sent from the terminal to the session manager if the stream needs to be requested (...requesting a program...page 21, lines 5-10 and page 23, lines 22-26).

Claim 7, wherein a release message is sent from the terminal to the session manager once the terminal is no longer acquiring the stream (page 21, lines 16-19).

Claim 8, wherein the session manager tracks demand-cast streams that are acquired by at least one terminal by maintaining a dynamic list of terminals that are presently acquiring each demand-cast stream (page 18, lines 12-27).

Claim 9, wherein the session manager 216 informs the transport stream generator 202 when a terminal request a demand-cast stream, which is not present in the transport stream (page 14, lines 17-page 15, lines 14).

Claim 10, wherein the session manager 216 informs the transport stream generator 202 when there is no longer any terminals acquiring the demand-cast stream (page 16, lines 29-35; page 21, lines 13-18).

Claim 11, wherein the distribution control center comprises a cable headend (see Fig. 1).

Claim 12, wherein the transport stream generator 202 is co-located with the session manager 216 at the distribution control center (see Fig. 2).

Claim 13, wherein the transport stream generator 202 is located separately from the session manager 216 (see Fig. 2).

Claim 14, a session manager 216 for monitoring and controlling usage of demand-cast bandwidth within a distribution network (page 20, lines 33-page 21, lines 19), the session manager (Fig. 4) comprising:

A monitoring module 218 for receiving acquisition, release, and request messages from a plurality of terminals;

A tracking module 220 for maintaining a dynamically list of terminals that are presently acquiring each demand-cast stream (page 14, lines 28-34; page 18, lines 1-6); and

A controlling module 222 for informing the transport stream generator 202 when a terminal requests demand-cast stream which is not present in the transport stream and for informing the transport stream generator when there is no longer any terminals acquiring the demand-cast stream (page 21, lines 16-19).

Claim 15, a transport generator, the stream generator comprising:

An interface to a session manager 216 for receiving demand-cast stream usage information from the session manager 216 (page 14, lines 17-22);

A multiplexer 214 for multiplexing demand-cast streams into a transport stream for transmission to a plurality of terminals via a distribution network (page 4, lines 31-34+ and page 13, lines 18-20); and

A controller 212 for controlling which demand-cast streams are multiplexed into the transport stream using the demand-cast stream usage information (page 13, lines 10-20).

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Aristides et al. (US 5630119) shows a system and method for displaying program listings in an interactive electronic program guide.

Matsuzaki et al. (US 6522672) shows a content-based multiplexer device and multiplexing method.

Ogawa et al. (EP 0 940987 A2) shows an apparatus and method for transporting information about broadcast programs.

Chaney et al. (US 5642153) shows a consumer interface for a digital television system.

Eyer et al. (US 5801753) shows a method and apparatus for providing an interactive guide to events available on an information network.

Krisbergh et al. (US 5999970) shows an access system and method for providing interactive access to an information source through a television distribution system.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hai Tran whose telephone number is 703-308-7372. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew Faile can be reached on 703-305-4380. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 2611

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

HT:ht
05/13/2004


HAI TRAN
PATENT EXAMINER